EXPERIENCE YOUR FULL POTENTIAL

ENABLING EXCEPTIONAL THINKING

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Roadmap to exceptional thinking

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01

The case for exceptional thinking

Organisations have a diverse range of threats and opportunities which could compromise or enhance their strategic objectives.

The capacity to respond well to change is heavily dependent on adaptive decision-making.

Organisations operating during times of ‘extreme change’, experience significantly more stress than during ‘business-as-usual’. This is because there is increased pressure on the decision-making capability of the teams, as decisions often need to be made where there is:

- Incomplete or conflicting information
- High levels of scrutiny
- Compressed timeframes
- Significant impacts

To ensure that the organisation is ‘future ready’, ‘agile’ and able to respond well to the rapid onset of change, individuals and teams need to become exceptional thinkers and navigators of change.

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Critical thinking skills in complex organisations

Changes in the way customers engage and advancements in automation has amplified the need for a faster organisational response to external challenges.

Organisations are looking for individuals and teams who are agile, able to learn new skills quickly, solve problems and make decisions with confidence. The World Economic Forum in its Future of Jobs Report placed complex problem solving at #1 in its top 10 skills for jobs in 2020 and by 2022 the need for Complex Problem Solving and Critical Thinking will increase in demand.

TOP 10 SKILLS IN 2020

1	Complex Problem Solving
2	Critical Thinking
3	Creativity
4	People Management
5	Coordinating with Others
6	Emotional Intelligence
7	Judgement and Decision Making
8	Service Orientation
9	Negotiation
10	Cognitive Flexibility

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03

What Australian executives say

During 2018 Janellis ran the Open Critical Thinking Lab series which was attended by 62 executives from leading ASX organisations and government agencies who shared their challenges and insights.

- “Good decision-making is the foundation of exceptional thinking”
- “Decisions are made without clarity and without knowledge of who is accountable and responsible”
- “The quality of information is not bad but we get overwhelmed with information
- “We find that people rarely think through the problem and go straight to known remedies”
- “There is a lack of ‘cut-through’ and decisions are often made with bias”
- “We can be took quick to make decisions without considering the facts and/or impacts”
- “There is no structure in our decision-making”

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04

Why is it so hard?

Definition

There is no universal definition of critical thinking

Measurement

Organisations and individuals lack simple ways to assess critical thinking

Critical thinking requires a wide range of skills

- **Verifying:** searching and validating information from multiple sources
- **Analysing:** understanding the facts, assumptions and gaps in information
- **Clarifying:** understanding the ‘main opportunity and issue’ and excluding unimportant information
- **Actioning:** identifying immediate actions with incomplete or conflicting information
- **Forecasting:** planning for most likely, worst case and best-case scenarios
- **Perceiving:** awareness of the broader impacts across the enterprise
- **Collaborating:** ‘active’ listening and building a ‘shared’ view
- **Synthesising:** ‘cutting through’ to develop a common operating picture
- **Prioritising:** agreeing on most important and longer-term opportunities and issues and reaching consensus on key ‘critical’ decisions
- **Planning:** developing plans to action key items
- **Communicating:** identifying all key stakeholders and having a robust, succinct and effective communications strategy

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The way organisations achieve exceptional thinking

The vast number of skills required to be an exceptional thinker highlights the need for a team-based approach that draws out the skills required, particularly where decisions need to be made under time pressure and with incomplete or conflicting information.

This can be achieved by:

- → Having the infrastructure to enable high quality strategic and operational decision making
- → The development of tools, processes and aide memoires to uplift capability and enable teams
- → An integrated training and coaching program

To be ‘lean’ and ‘agile’, organisations need to continuously evolve and meet the changing needs of customers and stakeholders.

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7-Steps of Critical Thinking

The seven-step process draws upon a combination of strategic and critical thinking skills from teams and provides thought diversity in problem solving.

The tool is designed to help senior executives through critical decision points when there is incomplete or conflicting information, high levels of scrutiny, consequences and compressed timeframes. The value of using the tool is having a structured and intuitive process that is oriented to drive action.

The Decision Support Tool is used to:

- → Facilitate deeper levels of thinking on a complex problem
- → Provide a more robust and objective approach to decision making
- → Challenge assumptions and uncover blindspots
- → Build a shared view of the risk and opportunities
- → Enable a more adaptive capacity to deal with change

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Embedding a culture of exceptional thinking

Embedding a culture of exceptional thinking involves executive leaders who are responsible for some of the most strategic and complex decisions, through to the day-to-day decisions that are made across the whole organisation.

Executives who are responsible for leading change, transformation, strategy and risk management, are a high priority group who usually have strong intuitive capability. These leaders gain value from using a structure to navigate through critical decisions points as a team.

To embed a culture of exceptional thinking, all people within the organisation need to become exceptional thinkers.

Embedding exceptional thinking can be done through eLearning modules, scenario-based activities, experiential learning, social learning and coaching.

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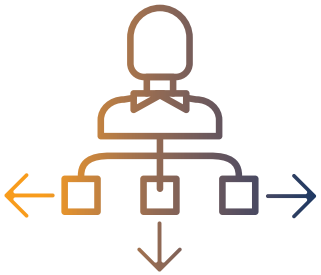
Uplifting critical thinking capability

Building a culture of exceptional thinking relies on strong support structures, tools and a willingness to work well together.

Support structures to enable sound decision-making include strong leadership, clarity of purpose, access to tools, training and coaching.

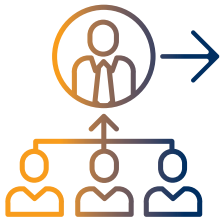
Critical Thinking Professional

An individual with exceptional thinking skills who can apply critical thinking process to a range of problems whilst taking input from others.



Critical Thinking Specialist

A specialist who can lead teams through critical decision points, enable complex problem solving and drive outcomes.



Critical Thinking Master Facilitator

A facilitator who can lead any team, from the executive to the project team, to enable team-based critical thinking and uplift capability across the whole organisation.

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